

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

City Hall Council Chambers  
120 E. Main St. Gardner, Kansas  
September 8, 2021 6 p.m.

### **CALL TO ORDER**

The Economic Development Advisory Committee meeting was called to order at 6:02 pm in the Council Chambers of the City Hall at 120 E. Main St., Gardner, Kansas. The following EDAC committee members attended, a quorum was present.

Members present: George Rifford; Stephanie Shaver; Harrison Hall; John Bowman; Brandon Williams

Staff present: David Knopick; Melissa Krayca; Kellan Headlee; Seth Gotchey

### **CONSENT AGENDA**

1. Approval of minutes as written for the EDAC meeting on July 21, 2021

**Motion made by Harrison Hall to approve the consent agenda item, seconded by Brandon Williams.**

**Motion passed 5-0.**

### **PRESENTATIONS**

Sadie Robb, AICP, Lochner Engineering presented information regarding the Gardner Municipal Airport Business and Economic Plan. The City received a KDOT grant to put together a Business and Economic Plan for the Gardner Municipal Airport. The airport is a three runway system with 88 based aircrafts and approximately 27,000 annual operations. There are no current businesses on the airport property but at one time there was a flight school. The ultimate goal for the airport is to gain support from the community while marketing new aeronautical and non-aeronautical activities while meeting facility operational requirements. The committee working the on the plan is currently in the data gathering stage.

Ms. Robb facilitated a discussion with the EDAC members which resulted in the following items being identified:

#### **Airport Strengths:**

- Community Feel, Small-town airport
- Location of Airport, Proximity to highway
- Type of Airspace, can be busy, but accommodates gliders and ultralights
- Growth, both city and county are growing
- Crosswind Runway Availability, turf runways

#### **Airport Weaknesses**

- Infrastructure, maintenance needs; runway length limited
- Airport Promotion, airport overlooked by public
- Marketing, no clear marketing strategy

#### **Airport Opportunities**

- Attracting Pilots, reasonable hangar rates; close to metro
- Aircraft Maintenance Training, closest is in Kansas City
- Educational Opportunity, STEM
- Resiliency Training/Preparedness, emergency response
- Available Land, infield infill potential
- Solar Farm, green development possibility
- Connection to Recreational Network, increase connectivity of community

#### Airport Threats

- Runway 3-21 Geometry, could impede future growth
- Nearby Solar Farm, increase in farms in Johnson and Douglas Counties
- Nearby Larger Airports, New Century Air Center and Johnson County Executive

#### **DISCUSSION**

Mr. Camis, Chamber of Commerce asked how many acres are available for potential growth. Mr. Headlee stated there are about 75 acres.

Ms. Robb asked the committee what business sector(s) could be a good fit for the Gardner Airport. Mr. Harrison believes the airport would be a great place for educational/mechanical training.

Mr. Gifford asked if there was a possibility for an affiliation with aircraft mechanics such as K-State but on smaller scale aircrafts. Mr. Williams referenced the Aviation Institute of Maintenance being the only aviation maintenance school in the area and maybe it would be good business model to move or create a secondary campus.

Mr. Bowman liked the idea of a food truck event to bring the community to the airport. Mr. Camis stated that programming the airport may be a good idea to engage the community. Most community members do not know what an asset the airport is. Restaurant space or office space could be potential business models. He also mentioned maybe considering selling the airport and relocating to a larger plot of land. Ms. Robb said the idea of sale will be considered in the plan but there are grants the city has accepted over the years have some bearing on a possible sale.

Some ideas that could engage the community were discussed amongst members:

- Hot air balloon festival
- Food trucks
- Coffee pop up
- Car shows
- Movies on the lawn
- Flex space
- Rental / Lease space for various activities (e.g. "man cave", etc.)

Ms. Shaver inquired about hours of operations of the airport and how that would affect the planning of a special event there. The airport is fully functional 24 hours a day, 365 hours a day. There is fuel available and a terminal building. Proper planning in advance would be required for a special event and there is enough parking for hundreds of people.

#### **DISCUSSION ITEMS**

Mr. Knopick gave a brief update on the permits issued in August.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

**Motion to adjourn made by Gifford and seconded by Williams.**

**Motion passed 5-0.**

**Motion adjourned at 07:58 p.m.**